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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2655
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1030
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3044
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2429
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000943

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH GKNB CHAIRMAN SUTALINOV

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana Gfoeller, Reasons 1.4 (b), (c), and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador held an introductory meeting September 15 with GKNB Chairman Sutalinov. Sutalinov said he welcomed continued cooperation with the United States in the fight against terrorism, and he expressed appreciation for recent training provided by a U.S. military team. Sutalinov said that while religion was a part of Kyrgyz tradition, he was concerned about growing extremism, particularly in the south. Ambassador noted the level of cooperation on counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, and she assured Sutalinov that U.S. assistance programs are designed to support Kyrgyzstan's independence and long-term stability. She asked for Sutalinov's continued efforts to secure the return of the U.S. training team's weapons and equipment, which were seized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in an August 4 raid. End summary.

Looking to Continue Cooperation

12. (C) Ambassador met September 15 with State Committee for National Security (GKNB) Chairman Murat Sutalinov. Sutalinov lauded the cooperation between the United States and Kyrgyzstan against terrorism, and he said he hoped that the "good relations" with the GKNB would improve during the Ambassador's tenure. Sutalinov expressed thanks for the training being provided by a U.S. military team, noting that the U.S. trainers had "combat experience" and the training was useful and effective. He said that the training was being conducted in a "friendly atmosphere," which contributed to developing good relations.

13. (C) Ambassador said that the United States valued Kyrgyzstan's partnership in the fight against terrorism and in counter-narcotics, and such joint efforts helped to promote regional security. Ambassador told Sutalinov that the U.S. wanted to continue counter-terrorism training, and she thanked Sutalinov for his help trying to get our team's weapons and equipment returned. The Ambassador added that

resolving this issue before the team departs Kyrgyzstan would be a good signal for future training. (Note: On August 4, a U.S. team, in Kyrgyzstan to conduct training with a GKNB unit, had weapons, equipment, personal gear and money seized during a raid by Ministry of Internal Affairs forces. The training went forward, but the weapons/equipment issue was referred to the Prosecutor General's office for criminal investigation. End Note.) Sutalinov responded that he was continuing to work on this, but said we should work with the Prosecutor General to resolve the case.

Religious Extremism

14. (C) Sutalinov expressed serious concern about the threat from religious extremism. He said that while Islam was part of their tradition, Kyrgyzstan had avoided the "Islamization" of culture experienced in neighboring countries, such as Uzbekistan. Sutalinov said that extremist groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, were spreading, particularly in the south, where the large ethnic-Uzbek population was more receptive to religious appeals.

Speaking "Openly" about Assistance

15. (C) Sutalinov said he had been able to "speak openly" with the Ambassador's predecessor about misunderstandings, and he hoped to continue that dialogue. Ambassador assured him that U.S. assistance programs, including USAID and the Peace Corps, aimed to support Kyrgyzstan's independence and long-term stability. Sutalinov said he appreciated U.S. assistance programs, and he praised the Peace Corps program

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for having volunteers work in villages, where local people could "see what you do" and ask questions. He said it was very rare for Peace Corps volunteers, or other European or American ex-pats, to be involved in any improper or criminal behavior. Sutalinov contrasted this with ex-pats involved in "business" who often ended up in trouble.

Comment

16. (C) The Ambassador stated clearly that the U.S. wanted stability in Kyrgyzstan, and that our assistance programs were transparent and designed to promote long-term stability. Sutalinov previously had requested to meet with senior embassy representatives to resolve misunderstandings about U.S. support for NGOs, USAID programs, and the Peace Corps. Sutalinov's words about the Peace Corps program were encouraging; however, Sutalinov and many in the Kyrgyz government remain suspicious of U.S. democracy and governance programs.
GFOELLER